

ENHANCING LEADERSHIP QUALITIES USING FANTASY LITERATURE FICTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is about leading a group and providing them with direction, solutions and motivation. Leaders set a direction for the people around them, help them see what lies ahead, visualise what they might achieve, encourage and inspire them. Leadership qualities are the set of characteristics that a person must possess in order to become a leader. The term leadership has been defined by Chemers (1997).

Leadership is a process by which one person influences the thoughts, attitudes and behaviours of others. Leadership has been described as a process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task.

KEYWORDS: Direction, Solutions, Motivation, Might Achieve, Encourage and Inspire.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the ability to get other people to do something significantly that they might not otherwise do and energise people towards a goal. Bernard Boss(1990) has defined the concept of leadership.

Leadership is the principal dynamic force that motivates and coordinates the organization in the accomplishment of its objectives.

Good leadership aids the group to solve problems and helps to move in the same direction and harness the efforts jointly. There is a little scope now for the belief in the past that one can become a leader directly without any practice because things have changed now due to diverse organisational settings and competitive workplace. One can become an effective leader only through patience, persistence and hard work. The evidence to show that 'leadership also develops through hard work and careful observation' has been studied by Forsyth (2009). Thus, effective leadership can result from acquiring necessary leadership skills. As long as one makes effort, it is not possible for one to become a true and effective leader.

LEADERSHP THEORIES

In the real life it is common to notice some leaders becoming successful while others fail. The reason is the characteristics that matter which make a leader successful. The concept that self-confidence improves one's performance in a variety of tasks including leadership has been studied by George P. Hollenbeck and Douglas T. Hall (2004). Some of the leadership traits that a leader must possess are assertiveness, decision making skills, stress management, anger management, teamwork, listening skill, integrity, empathy, perseverance, etc. There are many theories that describe a characteristic of a leader. Trait theory explains the type of person with common personality traits to become a leader.

Behavioural theory speaks about the behaviour of a good leader like autocratic leaders, democratic leaders and Laissez-faire leaders. Contingency theory explains how the situations influence one to be a good leader. Power and influence theories speak about the source of the leader's power and the ways that leaders use power and influence to get things done.

TRAITS OF A SUCCESSFUL LEADER

A good leadership needs to know how to take suggestions from other individuals. Whether it is at a job, for a sports team or in another environment, single person alone will be unable to stand to complete the task. Instead, leaders can and should listen to the suggestions that teammates have. This will create a sense of unity among the team; promote new products to customers and more. It is the responsibility of the leader to prove to their employees that he/she respects their feelings.

The qualities of a successful leadership include listening to criticism, consciousness and mutual respect for employees. Listening to criticism is difficult for anyone and leaders are not exempted from it but doing so is very important for a leader. Leaders must listen to the criticism and must take corrective measures to solve the problem. Listening is a surprising but sensible tool for showing respect. Indeed, followers are supposed to respect their leaders, but the reverse needs to be true as well. If they feel as though they are being respected, they will be much more willing to work harder for communal goals. If a leader never listens to the people who are a part of his or her team, they simply are not going to feel respected.

The quality traits of the leader can be acquired through reading literature because literature has the power to shape the personality of a person through its characters. This paper focuses on 'The Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban' the fantasy literature fiction and elucidates the qualities of a leader through its characters namely Harry Potter and the Teachers of Hogwarts.

LEADERSHIP QUALITIES WITH THE CHARACTERS OF 'THE HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN'

J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter novels speak about Hogwarts School, a high school for the magically gifted which has created a great impact in the field of education. Harry Potter is depicted as an exceptional student who is capable of leading in the midst of battle by knowing his identity as a wizard. Harry's leadership quality is confirmed by his willingness to die for his friends and caretakers in the end. On the other hand, negative leadership qualities are expressed by Lord Voldemort and administrators of the ministry of magic by manipulation and control over others.

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban' speaks about Harry's third year of schooling at Hogwarts. Harry is mentally strong and intelligent and depicted as a young man who turns suffering into motivation to create goodness and he gets moulded through his experience in school. Harry loses his parents and experiences troubles at the hands of powerful Dark Wizard Voldemort as an infant. These sufferings strengthen Harry and depict him as a kind of leader that organisations need in times of crisis. Harry possesses the qualities of a true leader such as courage, determination, perseverance, resilience and resourcefulness. Harry chooses his friends well and pays attention to what is going on around him. He learns early on how to use people's talents as well as other creatures for the greater good and how to accept help when it is needed and how to delegate tasks to people with proper skills to get things done. To quote an example, Hagrid introduces hippogriff, the mythical creature in his care of magical arts class, and says "they're proud. Easily offended, hippogriffs are. Don't ever insult one" (Rowling J. K 1999) and requests the students to go on a ride with hippogriff. Most

of the students in the class are afraid to face the creature but Harry accepts Hagrid's appeals. Rowling (1999) narrates the courage of Harry Potter as

"No one?" said Hagrid, with a pleading look.

"I'll do it," said Harry.

Harry is brave and does the work that others are afraid of including taking chances in giving up his own life, for the greater good. He treats everyone fairly, whether it is a witch, wizard, goblin, elf or any of the many magical creatures that are introduced in the series. That is why he is able to complete the successful ride on Hippogriff. He has the skill that helps him convince others to take chances in helping him get things done, even if he does not ask for help. For instance, Hermione helps Harry using Time Turner machine to save Sirius and Bucklebeak from their execution. He speaks through action and helps his friends by teaching the techniques to fight against Voldemort. The training he has acquired through his school and teachers helps him a lot when he finally faces Voldemort in the Battle of Hogwarts to vanquish him.

The school atmosphere and the teachers help students learn many value based skills and most of the teachers like Professor Dumbledore, Professor McGonagall, Hagrid and Professor Lupin help students in one way or the other in their adventures. Albus Dumbledore, the Headmaster, stands as an example of a real leader with valour and courage. He is considered as a very classic wizard of all wizards. Dumbledore takes care of Harry Potter and teaches him the things he should know before facing Voldemort, the evil force. He is often described as the greatest wizard of the age and Harry respects him because of his belief in him that 'You couldn't help trusting Albus Dumbledore' (Rowling 1999). Professor Dumbledore is a person full of energy, experience and assists Harry in times of danger as Megan L. Birch (Elizabeth Heilman 2003) states

Dumbledore is a "great teacher" with "great energy". He is a "great mentor" to Harry and his friends. He stands as a mark of a good leader with excellent leadership qualities.

Professor Dumbledore is the Headmaster of Hogwarts, a man of great wisdom, who shows great transformational leadership skills where he focuses on empowerment of his faculty as well the students. Also, he is the Founder of the "Order of the Phoenix", which is an organisation to fight Lord Voldemort. Professor Dumbledore though very old, always gives the impression of great energy. He has several feet of long silver hair, half-moon spectacles, an extremely crooked nose, tall, thin and has blue eyes. He guides the students in all their activities from their very first day of their school. Perhaps people believe him for he safeguards the students from the evil forces even if he does not like them. This has been clearly stated by Rowling (1999) in the story through Mrs. Weasley's statement.

"The safest place on earth was wherever Albus Dumbledore happened to be".

"Didn't people always say that Dumbledore was the only person Lord Voldemort had ever been afraid of?"

He is always enthusiastic about the cause of the people and has the capability to see what is good or bad for the people. Approaching the problem in a holistic manner, he never treats himself and the students separate even if he does not like them. People have a firm belief in him that the evil forces are afraid of him.

Professor McGonagall is the House mistress of the Gryffindor House and is a stern but a dynamic personality who

stands as a role model for how a teacher should be. Professor McGonagall is the Head of the Gryffindor house, Acting and Deputy Headmistress and Transfiguration teacher at Hogwarts. She is an intelligent teacher and a strict disciplinarian. She acts as a role model of a good teacher as well as a great leader. For instance, when Harry asks McGonagall if he can go to Hogsmeade for the weekend outing, McGonagall refuses since he lacks written permission from Uncle Vernon who is Harry's guardian and says

"I'm afraid not, Potter," she (Professor McGonagall) said. "You heard what I said. No form, no visiting the village. That's the rule". (Rowling 1999)

She is not ready to stretch the rules even for Harry who is considered as a very good student by her. Rowling has constructed more dynamic and complex character through McGonagall with leadership qualities. Megan (2003) has rightly pointed out that

Readers come to believe that she is deeply concerned about her students, though this is in the context in her code of ethics-following the rule and working hard.

She is a great aficionado of Quidditch and guides Harry to achieve success in Quidditch game and also in many other occasions in the school.

RebusHagrid, Care of Magical Arts teacher is yet another example of a personality with gentle character. He is a very enthusiastic teacher interested in magical creatures that sometimes forgets the practical difficulty in applying the lesson. His lessons on riding a real Hippogriff, teaches his students a sense of valor. Hagrid's words of encouragement motivate Harry to go on a successful ride with real Hippogriff. Hagrid exclaims,

"Well done, Harry!" said Hagrid, ecstatic. "Right -- yeh can touch him! Pat his beak, go on!" (Rowling).

Hagrid safeguards Harry and his friends and also helps them solve their disputes.

Professor Lupin is a young, cool and a good teacher. He seems to have a never-ending supply of chocolates on hand, teaches to fight Dementors and he is also a werewolf. Lupin really takes on the role of Harry's mentor in this book and does a good job. His various conversations with Harry after their Patronus charm training sessions are most important which helps Harry learn the skill without fear. Lupin says that 'It is the quality of one's convictions that determines success, not the number of followers' (Rowling 1999) which reveals his leadership trait.

At the Welcoming Feast, Dumbledore announces that Professor Lupin is the new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher. In his first-ever lesson with Harry's class, Lupin demonstrates an unexpected ability in subduing Peeves. The mark of a leader is to encourage his followers to complete the task without fear or hesitation so to prove his leadership quality, Lupin gives Neville Longbottom a much-needed boost in confidence by having him lead an exercise to ward off a Boggart (reveals character's deepest fears). Lupin's practical, hands-on teaching methods are popular with students, making him an instant favourite. When Harry later asks why Lupin prevented him from tackling his own Boggart, Lupin says he has a fear that it will turn into Lord Voldemort and frighten the class. 'Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban' portrays the qualities of a leader through its teachers who confine themselves into the defined qualities of a perfect leader and serve as real leaders for the cause of good.

CONCLUSIONS

J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series inhibits not only leadership skills but also many interpersonal skills through its characters throughout the novels and a careful analysis of these characters and the ways in which they confront challenges in different situations and solve the problems help the readers understand the importance of soft skills in a better manner. Since the novel is about the challenges of real life situations, if the readers observe different characters and the situations in which they exhibit their talents, they will be stimulated to become a leader like Harry and other characters in their real life too and build up their behavioural attitude so as to be on par with the qualities of the hero.

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